

Chapter No. 2009

15/HR03/R1772

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***HOUSE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 50***

Originated in House



Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 50

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING MR. BILLY J. ORR UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE FAIR COMMISSION AND EXPRESSING TO HIM THE GRATITUDE OF THE MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE FOR HIS EXEMPLIFICATION OF LEADERSHIP DURING HIS UNPARALLELED AND DISTINGUISHED CAREER.

WHEREAS, as Executive Director of the Mississippi State Fair Commission, Billy J. Orr has steered the State Fairgrounds through a period of unparalleled growth which has allowed the State Fairgrounds to emerge as the principal economic engine for downtown Jackson; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Orr, who served as Executive Director of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds from 1978 until his retirement in 1999 under Commissioners of Agriculture and Commerce Jim Buck Ross, Lester Spell and Cindy Hyde-Smith, returned to lead the entity's operations in 2009, has again retired, but only from his fairground duties while continuing to serve in the capacity of Public Relations Director for the Mississippi State Fair Commission; and

WHEREAS, born on June 25, 1933, in the Community of Chester, Mississippi, located in the Red Hills of Choctaw County, Billy's chivalrous and gentlemanly conduct pierced the heart and won the affection of the beautiful and quintessential belle of the ball that would become his wife, Delois, with whom he built a lifetime of memories and happiness with the addition of three children to complete their family unit until God appointed Mrs. Orr to His legion of guardian angels when summoning her presence to His side in heaven's kingdom; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Mississippi State University with a degree in forestry, Mr. Orr evidenced his allegiance and patriotism to the stars and stripes of the American banner by devoting 26 years of meritorious service in the United States Army on active duty and in the Army Reserve before retiring as a Colonel to assume forester duties with the State Forestry Commission headquartered in Brandon, Mississippi, and subsequent thereto, the manager of the Rankin County Chamber of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, on July 1, 1978, Mr. Orr was appointed Executive Director of the Mississippi State Fair Commission, and within ten months of his appointment had to face the worst natural disaster of its time to impact Central Mississippi in the wake of the Great Easter Flood of 1979, which covered the entire fairgrounds and submerged every building in four to eight feet of water, and leveraging Three Million Dollars in damages, with half of these

necessary emergency repair and renovation funds deriving from the Fair Commission's special fund account; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Billy was responsible for supervising much progress on the fairground renovations and purchase of property, including overseeing the expenditure of approximately Nineteen Million Dollars in the early 1990s, after being granted legislative authority, on specified projects, one of which was the state-of-the-art Kirk Fordice Equine Center; new elevators for the Coliseum; new paving and new fencing around the 105 acre site; and new entrance gates and roads, security lighting and other security measures; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the 155th Mississippi State Fair that ended on October 12, 2014, was without question the largest and had the greatest number of fairgoers in the Deep South to date with a record-breaking attendance of 712,798 vistors, solidifying the event as the most popular event in Mississippi each year; and

WHEREAS, under Mr. Orr's leadership, the Biscuit Booth was added and became an instant success, with more than 110,000 free biscuits given away in 2014, as Billy has proven himself an ally of families by presenting wholesome and clean entertainment at the fairgrounds on a regular basis at a reasonable cost; and

WHEREAS, Billy is the proud and doting father of three successful and supportive children: Whitney, who works with the Mississippi Development Authority Division of Tourism; Joey, who

is the former Director of the Veterans Memorial Stadium Commission; and John; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to acknowledge the selfless services of individuals of Mr. Orr's caliber, whose career has established a standard of excellence in his field including ethics, integrity, civility, courtesy and adherence to the Golden Rule, as his tenure as Executive Director has honored both the Mississippi State Fair Commission and this great state that he loves and serves:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize Billy J. Orr upon the occasion of his retirement as the Executive Director of the Mississippi State Fair Commission and express to him the gratitude of the Mississippi Legislature for his exemplification of leadership during his unparalleled and distinguished career of facilitating the exciting growth of the largest fair in the Deep South, and extend best wishes for future success in the lighter years of his retirement duties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be furnished to

Mr. Billy Orr, the Mississippi Fair Commission and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 17, 2015



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 24, 2015



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

